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Railroads, Reconstruction, and the Gospel of Prosperity: Aid Under the Radical Republicans, 1867-1877. By Mark W. Summers. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984. Pp. xiii -l- 361. Coda, appendix, abbreviations, notes, etc.

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racism and romanticism. Riding, although he does an excellent job in general, leans toward the latter pitfall, thinking perhaps that relations between the two countries will improve if Americans view their southern neighbors more favorably. However, even a hint of romanticism is dangerous in the case of Mexico and its people because of the current difficulties in the relationship between the United States and Mexico. Members of influential cultures like the United States have a tendency to romanticize peoples that they desire to dominate; such romanticization can, in fact, be part of the conquest.

It is important, then, that in attempting to understand the Mexicans we come to see them as different from ourselves, without romanticizing the differences. To do so is to accept them as other unique humans and to respect them as such. Distant neighbors can neither denigrate nor romanticize each other's unique characteristics, but must come to view themselves as equals, if they are to become closer working partners and closer friends.

Distant Neighbors constitutes an important addition to writing on Mexico, and becomes even more valuable to the general reader with consideration of the two issues delineated here.

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Railroads, Reconstruction, and the Gospel of Prosperity: Aid Under the Radical Republicans, 1867-1877. By MARK W. SUMMERS. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984. Pp. xiii + 361. Coda, appendix, abbreviations, notes, bibliography, and index. \$37.50.

The triumph of revisionism in Reconstruction historiography, for all its virtues, stifled interest in significant areas of southern history. The defense of Radical Reconstruction so apparent in the writing in recent years obscured more negative aspects of Republican rule, especially those stressed by earlier scholars hostile to Reconstruction. The topic of railroad subsidies and political corruption offers a case in point. *Railroads, Reconstruction, and the Gospel of Prosperity*, by Mark W. Summers, is the first book-length study of this subject for decades, and it is long overdue. Summers' book moves beyond the concerns of the revisionists to reveal new insights about railroads and economic policy during the period.

There is much in this book to support the revisionist position. Summers is frankly sympathetic to the concept of state aid to the railroads; among other things a successful railroad program could have helped "efface the race issue and woo conservatives." (p. x) Summers found that in most

southern states railroad legislation was competently designed and in some, Arkansas for example, government aid was honestly administered. Democratic legislators, moreover, were nearly as sympathetic to subsidies as their Republican counterparts; local interests generally prevailed over political ideology. Further, Democratic state administrations during the period were hardly exempt from corruption. In an appendix to the work, "Could the Democrats Have Done Better?," Summers speculates that Democratic rule would have meant "fewer railroads but no less corruption, and no fewer economic problems than Republicans encountered." (p. 306)

Despite this, there is also a good deal in this work that the Dunning school historians of the turn of the century would have found familiar; the stereotype of political adventurers fleeing the region receives ample support in Summers' work. He concludes that the gap between promises and performance was so grave that "the Republicans deserved to lose power. They had elected incompetents and mountebanks, corruptionists and self-serving mediocrities." (p. 295). His detailed study concludes that outright bribery was rampant in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. In Alabama, moderate Republican Governor W. H. Smith's involvement with the railroad lobby is examined at length, with the result that he is numbered "among the fools" for issuing vast amounts of illegal railroad bonds. (p. 246) Summers essentially holds that the Republicans promulgated an early version of the New South ideal, and when the dream of railroad-engendered prosperity collapsed following the Depression of 1873, the surviving Reconstruction governments fell almost of their own weight.

Summers' is a fine work of scholarship, provocative and thoughtful, but because of its ambitious scope there is a good deal with which one can take issue. The indictments of corruption are made on overwhelmingly Democratic testimony; while perhaps inevitable, this limits one's confidence in Summer's findings. A more important objection to this book is the fact that black legislators and voters drop from the narrative altogether. (The index reveals no separate references to blacks at all.) Summers' account suggests that many black politicians took bribes—though on a smaller scale than their white colleagues—but the whole issue of their distinctive motivation is almost untouched. There is little discussion of the black community and the railroads, and this seems a serious problem given the fact that they represented the bulk of Republican voters.

There is also the tendency in this work to subordinate other political matters to the railroad program as critical to Republican fortunes. For example, Summers argues that without terrorism the Republicans were doomed in most of the South by the mid-seventies, and that even in Mississippi and South Carolina the results would have been "doubtful" in

a fair election due to demoralization over corruption.(p. 295) This is an astonishing conclusion; in the latter two states blacks comprised an absolute majority, and the civil rights issue was far more important to them than the railroads. Democrats had made no inroads into the black vote in either state—or anywhere else for that matter—and without armed terror neither state could have been “redeemed.”

Another example of this same overemphasis on the railroad issue is his denigration of the significance of Unionist sentiment in Appalachia and elsewhere. Summers argues that Republicans had no choice but espouse the Gospel of Prosperity, since “concentration on the . . . wartime loyalty issue would have doomed the Reconstruction coalition to minority status from the start.” (p. 300) This is questionable, especially given recent research emphasizing the strength of Unionism among small farmers. In North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and perhaps other states yeoman Unionists probably were numerous enough to hold the balance of power, and it is not evident that taxing their land for railroads was the best way to hold their allegiance.

Despite these caveats, this is a much-needed book. It serves as an excellent example to the rest of us working in the Reconstruction period of how much is left to say about the field.

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Tribal Dispossession and the Ottawa Indian University Fraud. By WILLIAM E. UNRAU and H. CRAIG MINER. Norman, Oklahoma: Oklahoma University Press, 1985. Pp. xii + 212. Notes, bibliography, index.

William E. Unrau and H. Craig Miner have written a narrative history of the machinations surrounding a small Baptist-sponsored mission school for the Ottawa Indians in Kansas. In the mid-nineteenth century that school blossomed into the Baptist-controlled Ottawa University, still in existence today, and attended predominantly by Euramericans. That transformation is a complex and interesting tale of intrigue, fraud, deception, and greed. The authors tell of devout Baptists with an eye to the main chance and few scruples about using the educational funds and lands granted the Ottawa people to promote Kansas development and make handsome personal profits in land speculation. It is a fascinating story of the means utilized by a group of unscrupulous, if creative, entrepreneurs to bilk an Indian people.

Unrau and Miner present as colorful a cast of characters as ever graced a